

Unit Objectives

- Describe how decisions made before an emergency affect decision making and problem solving during an emergency.
- Describe the steps in the problem-solving model.
- Review a case study and distinguish the problem from its causes and symptoms.

Problem Solving vs. Decision Making

Problem solving is a set of activities designed to analyze a situation systematically and generate, implement, and evaluate solutions.

Decision making is a mechanism for making choices at each step of the problem-solving process.

Decision making is part of problem solving.

Problem-Solving Model

Steps:

1. Identify the problem.
2. Explore alternatives.
3. Select an alternative.
4. Implement the solution.
5. Evaluate the solution.

Step 1: Identify the Problem

A **problem** is a situation or condition of people or the organization that will exist and is considered undesirable.

Problem Parameters

- What is happening
- Who is involved
- What the stakes are

Step 2: Explore Alternatives

- Generate alternatives
- Evaluate alternatives

Generating Alternatives

Techniques:

- Brainstorming
- Surveys
- Discussion groups

Step 3

Select an alternative

Factors that Affect Decision Making

- Political factors
- Safety factors
- Financial factors
- Environmental considerations
- Ethical factors

Step 4: Implement the Solution

- Develop an action plan.
- Determine objectives.
- Identify needed resources.
- Build a plan.
- Implement the plan.

Step 5: Evaluate the Solution

- Monitor progress
- Evaluate the results

Unit Summary

In Unit 2, we:

- Examined the decision-making process
- Learned a five-step model for problem solving

Next: Identifying Decision-Making Styles
and Attributes